



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Baker-Polito Administration Re-Launch Governor's Council on Sexual  
Assault and Domestic Violence**

*Elevated office to set annual goals, recommendations and focus on implementation of  
Ch. 260*

**BOSTON** – Governor Charlie Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, joined by Attorney General Maura Healey, unveiled an executive order to re-launch the Governor's Council to address sexual assault and domestic violence. The executive order elevates the council to the Governor's Office and names Lt. Governor Karyn Polito as the chair. Over the next year, the council will be charged with implementing Chapter 260 Domestic Violence legislation, enacted in 2014 and reviewing programs aimed at reducing sexual assault and domestic violence in the Commonwealth.

"During the final days of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, I am pleased to sign an executive order aimed at helping individuals and children live a life free of sexual assault and domestic violence," **said Governor Baker.** "Our charge is to improve prevention, enhance support and demand accountability for perpetrators to ensure they can no longer hurt others."

The new council will set and report on annual goals and recommendations related to the Commonwealth's funding, programs and best practices for the response, prevention and treatment of domestic violence and sexual assault. Consisting of up to 30 members representing providers, advocates, health care, the Attorney General's Office, law enforcement, the courts and higher education, the Council will meet at minimum every two months, conducting outreach and establishing committees to carry out their tasks. The Executive Director will carry out the day-to-day operations and support for the Council.

"Our hope is to bridge the gap between services and agencies to ensure they can work collaboratively to support survivors and prevent them from homelessness due to domestic violence and sexual assault," **said Lt. Governor Polito**. "I look forward to working with this council to identify best practices and determine ways to help survivors reach economic security and self-sufficiency."

The Governor and Lt. Governor were joined by Attorney General and council member Maura Healey, Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Public Safety and Security Dan Bennett, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash, the Council's new Executive Director and several members of the Council named to date.

"I'd like to thank Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito for reestablishing this council to oversee the implementation of the domestic violence law that will give important legal protections to victims, increase awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault, help hold offenders accountable for their actions, and improve services for survivors," **said Attorney General Maura Healey**. "We are committed to working together to make sure that every resident of Massachusetts has the opportunity to live a safe and healthy life, free from violence."

The Governor and Lt. Governor announced that Tammy Mello, currently the Director of Violence Prevention at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, will assume the role of Executive Director for the Council.

"I look forward to working with the Baker-Polito administration and the Council as we look to end domestic violence and sexual assault," **said Tammy Mello**. "Education is key to prevention and support and there is much more we can learn from law enforcement, advocates, healthcare providers and survivors in order to make progress towards that goal."

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, over 2,000 incidents of sexual assault were reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (DPH) Rape Crisis Centers. In Massachusetts, nearly 1 in 6 women and 1 in 21 men report experiencing rape, attempted rape or physical sexual assault in their lifetime according to DPH, with the majority of rapes reported being committed by intimate partners, family members or acquaintances according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nationally, the Surgeon General has declared domestic violence the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15-44, and in Massachusetts, 13% of all families entering the Emergency Assistance system cited domestic violence as the reason for homelessness.

“As the state coalition of nearly 60 community based sexual and domestic violence programs in Massachusetts, we look forward to working with the Baker Administration and the members of this Council to seek solutions in terms of policy and practice that support survivors, hold offenders accountable and prevent abuse in all communities throughout Massachusetts,” **said Debra J. Robbin, Executive Director of Jane Doe Inc. and Council Member.**

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito have also proclaimed April as Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

**Governor’s Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence**

*(Members Named To Date)*

**Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, Chair**

**David Adams**

*Co-Founder and Co-Director, Emerge*

**Stephanie Brown**

*CEO, Casa Myrna*

**Kim Dawkins**

*Executive Director, Pathways for Change, Inc.*

**Commissioner Edward Dolan**

*Office of the Commissioner of Probation*

**Mark Dubois**

*Chief of Police, Maynard Police Department*

**Suzanne Dubus**

*CEO, Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center*

**Worcester County District Attorney Joe Early**

**Sarah Ellis**

*Deputy General Counsel, Massachusetts District Court*

**Attorney General Maura Healey**

**Liam Lowney**

*Executive Director, Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA)*

**Linda Molchan**

*Northeast Regional Coordinator for the Massachusetts Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner  
(SANE) Program*

*Department of Public Health and SANE Liaison, Lawrence General Hospital*

**Sarah Perry**

*Executive Director, Second Step*

**Debra Robbin**

*Executive Director, Jane Doe Inc.*

**Emily Rothman**

*Associate Professor, Boston University School of Public Health*

**Nancy Scannell**

*Director of Policy and Planning, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to  
Children*

**Michelle Smith**

*Executive Director, Women of Means*

**Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan**

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